



NUTRITION & FOOD SYSTEMS

Transforming Food Systems for Nutrition and Food Security

ACDI/VOCA works to improve nutrition and food security outcomes by improving food availability, access, desirability, and safety in local food systems. Our work spans across the food system from producer to consumer, including food processing, marketing and trade, and food retailing.

With a long history in food security and nutrition, ACDI/VOCA has implemented over 20 nutrition-sensitive projects across Latin America, West Africa, East Africa, and Southeast Asia. ACDI/VOCA applies expertise in [market systems](#), [resilience strengthening](#), and [private sector engagement](#) to support local actors in developing solutions to systemic challenges of malnutrition and food insecurity.

Our [nutritious food systems approach](#) aims to create a food environment where all people can access and afford healthy, safe, and desirable foods throughout the year. We work with local actors across the system to increase food production, reduce loss and waste, and improve processing, marketing, and access to markets. Our approach adapts to the complexities of global and local food system dynamics, recognizing that food system functions also effect livelihoods, the environment, and community dignity, and are experienced differently by women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Boosting food production: We work with farmers and agribusiness to improve yields, diversify production, and enhance nutritious quality of food crops, and to reduce losses during and after harvest to increase the amount of nutritious food reaching markets.

Enhancing trade, processing, and marketing of food: We partner with businesses along the food chain, such as wholesalers, vendors, and food processors, to reduce loss and increase the safety, nutrient content, and sale of foods in rural marketplaces. Through local policy work and capacity development of rural market actors, we establish an enabling environment for a food system that promotes the sale of safe, nutritious foods.

Developing consumer demand: We engage communities and public and private sector actors to increase demand for and consumption of nutritious diets by target populations by changing behaviors, improving knowledge, and enhancing women's agency. We partner with media agencies and institutions to enable adoption of social marketing strategies to promote nutritious foods.



Food market in Ghana

ACDI/VOCA's Signature Nutrition and Food Systems Tools

- [Food Environment Analysis](#)
- [Nutrition-Sensitive Intervention Selection Tool](#)
- [Nutrition Strategy Development Guidance](#)

The ACDI/VOCA Nutrition and Food Systems Approach in Action

The **Kenya Livestock Market Systems (LMS) Activity** (2017-2024) engaged actors across the livestock system to increase availability, affordability, and safety of animal source foods in Northern Kenya. The LMS Activity strengthened the risk management capacity of Livestock Market Associations (LMAs), leading to a revitalization of markets that had been threatened by COVID-19 closures and security threats.



More vibrant markets attracted entrepreneurs, leading to a **19-percentage point increase** in households engaged in animal source food production.

This increase in production has led to **68% of households** reporting that nutritious food is now more available locally.



Participant households experienced a **43% increase in income**, with **64% of households** reporting that nutritious food is now more affordable to them.

LMS participant households are now able to **allocate more money towards school fees and re-investment in their businesses**, reducing the portion of income they need to spend on food from **85% to 63%**.



At the same time, **diets improved**. The percent of women participating in LMS activities consuming an **adequately diverse diet** increased from **9.7% in 2018 to 24.4% by 2024**.



The **Feed the Future Bangladesh Livestock and Nutrition Activity** (2021-2026) has leveraged private sector partnerships to improve access, affordability, and safety of animal-source foods, even in rural areas. Activities were designed through a methodical SBC approach to change actor behaviors throughout the livestock and dairy systems.

The Activity trained mid-sized processors in developing and marketing healthier, more convenient, and shelf-stable products in smaller, more affordable packaging sizes, leading to an **average increase in sales of 40% for dairy and 85% for meat**. Similar trainings on milk hygiene and nutritional benefits were facilitated to an additional **300 small-scale dairy processors and retailers** through partnership with two local universities, and to over **77,000 dairy farmers** by a network of **1,755 livestock service providers**.

Through several public-sector partnerships, the activity has **trained over 1,300 community health workers and religious leaders** so far to disseminate nutrition and hygiene messaging, reaching over half a million people and revitalizing consumer demand for safe and diversified dairy and meat products.

The USAID-funded **Feed the Future Mozambique Resiliência Integrada na Nutrição e Agricultura (FTF RESINA) Activity** is a five-year project launched May 2022 to improve food security, natural resource use, nutrition, and women and youth empowerment of at least 50,000 rural households in Nampula and Zambezia provinces of Mozambique. To achieve food system transformation objectives, the project partners with food entrepreneurs to integrate fortification into food processing, increase distribution of nutritious food products to remote markets, and develop new business models to reduce prices and increase household uptake of diet diversification and improved child feeding practices.

The USAID-funded **Feed the Future Ghana Market Systems and Resilience (MSR) Activity** is a five-year project to improve agricultural market system function in northern Ghana, where ACIDI/VOCA is building on over a decade of experience. A key approach for MSR is developing an ecosystem of service providers to support food businesses in creating higher quality products, marketing products more effectively, and ensuring safe handling from farm to consumer. MSR has partnered with the Ghana Food and Drugs Authority to launch a multimedia food safety awareness campaign, engaging youth and community groups to inform and motivate market managers, vendors, and consumers on key issues such as reducing exposure to harmful bacteria, chemical residues and aflatoxin.